(c) A provision of Rs. 200 crores has been approved by the Government for the purpose of payment of statutory dues by way of Salary, Provident Fund, Gratuity etc. including VSS benefits.

Power to fix limits on professional tax to States and UTs

228. SHRI RAMDAS AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to hand over the power to fix a limit on Professional tax to States and Union territories by amending the Constitution of India;

(b) whether any consensus in this regarded was arrived at the conference of State Chief Ministers and Union Finance Minister held recently in New Delhi; and

(c) whether any decision was taken at the Centre-States level conference to reduce mounting States, deficit, reduction in non-plan expenditure and, if necessary, to take tough decisions to restore over-all stability of the country?

THE MINISTER TO STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) and (b) Discussion was held on this issue in the Conference of Chief Ministers held on 22.6.2000- A consensus emerged that the power to fix limit on professional lax should be given to the States by amending the Constititution after proper discussions.

(c) No, Sir.

SC/ST quota in promotion of Customs and Excise, Inspectors

†229. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether SC/ST quota in the promotion of Inspectors in the Department of Customs and Excise has been filled;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether posts reserved for SC/ST have been filled up with persons from general category;

(d) whether Customs and Excise Board has issued any orders with a view to rectify this irregularity; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.